United Nations A/53/379

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 September 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Item 68 of the provisional agenda*

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–2	2
II.	Observations	3–7	2

* A/53/150

98-26853 (E) 240998

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 52/34 of 9 December 1997, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region of the Middle East and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 46/30 of 6 December 1991 and taking into account the evolving situation in the region, and to seek from those States their views on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to his report (A/45/435) or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. In paragraph 11 of the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-third session a report on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report is submitted in response to the request contained in paragraph 11 of resolution 52/34.

II. Observations

3. The Secretary-General has continued to attach particular importance to the issue and has, as in previous years, carried out consultations in various ways with concerned parties within and outside the region to explore ways and means of promoting the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, taking into account in particular the evolving situation in the region.

4. The Secretary-General welcomes the fact that all Arab States have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. He has noted their reaffirmed determination to exert utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

5. The Secretary-General notes with regret that no positive developments have occurred in the consideration of the issue and that the overall political situation in the region has not served to advance the peace process further. He is particularly concerned about the continuing impasse in the work of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security. The Secretary-General remains convinced that, under appropriate circumstances, the Working Group could still play a useful role as a forum for discussing a broad range of arms control, disarmament and confidence-building measures, including the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

6. For that reason, the Secretary-General once again strongly urges all concerned parties to review the situation in order to determine possible new approaches and to resume discussions with a view to developing practical concepts that would make it possible to establish as expeditiously as possible a common position. This would serve as a confidence-building measure in itself and would also facilitate the overall peace process. In this connection, the Secretary-General reiterates that the United Nations is ready to continue to provide any assistance deemed helpful in moving the discussions forward.

7. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of resolution 52/34, to date, no replies have been received. Should the Secretary-General receive replies from Member States, they will be issued as addenda to the present report.